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SUBJECT: T&T UPDATES USOAS AMBASSADOR ON 2009 SUMMIT OF THE
AMERICAS PREPARATIONS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: GOTT Ministers and the National Summit Coordinator welcomed the visit of USOAS Ambassador Hector Morales to consult on preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas, April 2009 in Port of Spain. T&T aims to unveil the initial draft Summit declaration in mid-July, with text negotiations to start in September. Logistical arrangements are also in train, including two cruise ships to provide overflow accommodations. T&T will seek U.S. assistance with Summit security, including air and sea coverage as well as sweeps of the cruise ships. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Hector Morales, U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), visited Trinidad May 19-20 to consult with the GOTT on preparations for the Fifth Summit of the Americas (SOA), which will take place April 17-19, 2009, in Port of Spain. Ambassador Morales was accompanied by State/E Special Assistant Tom Pierce. Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, the National Summit Coordinator for Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), attended all substantive meetings. Morales' meeting with Prime Minister Manning is reported septel.

Foreign Minister sees prospects for consensus

¶3. (SBU) Foreign Minister Paula Gopee-Scoon opened her meeting with Amb. Morales by noting that she had come away from the EU-Latin American leaders' meeting in Lima feeling optimistic about the prospects for achieving consensus on SOA themes, many of which were also addressed in the EU meeting. She praised Peru for having "put on a good show." On the other hand, the meeting had accomplished less for the Caribbean than it could have, for example with respect to bananas. While T&T had good side meetings, other Caribbean countries were less active.

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador Morales said he was looking forward to the OAS General Assembly in Medellin as an opportunity to build consensus. Minister Gopee-Scoon turned to Ambassador Rodriguez to ask about the status of preparations to circulate a draft SOA declaration at the OASGA. Rodriguez explained that the draft document needed more input from Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) partner institutions, and Ambassador Morales commented that it would be better to have the data before finalizing the declaration.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador Morales stressed that the US was committed to the success of the SOA, which would undoubtedly be one of the first trips abroad for the new U.S. President and would underscore continuing bipartisan US commitment to the hemisphere. When the Minister sought assurances that the new President would definitely attend the SOA, Morales indicated that the new President would have strong foreign policy incentives to do so.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Morales said that the themes of environment, energy, social inclusion, security etc. were appropriate for the entire continent and called for renewed emphasis by the 34

democratically elected leaders. Noting that food security and food prices would undoubtedly be raised at the SOA, he cautioned against overemphasizing the impact of corn-based ethanol on food prices. He also stressed the need to ensure that well-intentioned environmental initiatives do not undercut the competitiveness of the hemisphere. Minister Gopee-Scoon replied that it would be important to balance environmental, energy, and food security concerns, all of which were inter-related.

¶7. (SBU) Given the challenge of getting 34 leaders to agree on anything, Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez said that a series of SIRG meetings prior to the SOA would doubtless be required. The Minister, by contrast, cited her experience at the EU meeting in Lima as a basis for optimism that the SOA would achieve consensus on these issues. Ambassador Rodriguez explained that many unaccomplished mandates remained from previous SOAs. While T&T's proposal to have a declaration of commitment was intended to break the trend of proliferating mandates, it would be more challenging to negotiate. Minister Gopee-Scoon countered that these were different times and that OAS members should understand the need to work together.

¶8. (SBU) Ambassador Morales, citing the numerous challenges encountered at the Mar del Plata Summit, echoed the Minister's hope that after that experience, SOA leaders will be more prepared than in the past to work constructively toward consensus. It would be important to have a practical approach to solving the various issues raised at the next SOA, he said. Citing the recent food crisis in Haiti, he said that the US and the OAS were acting collectively to address the problem, and that he hoped this approach would prevail during the next SOA. The Minister advised that T&T was about to release US\$7 million for Haiti from the CARICOM Petroleum Fund. Ambassador Rodriguez said he had been very pleased with the

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cooperation he had received from the Department of State, and noted that, although he was probably not as optimistic as the Foreign Minister, he was confident that Trinidad and Tobago would rise to the occasion and host a successful SOA.

National Security Minister praises US-TT cooperation

¶9. (SBU) Ambassador Austin accompanied Ambassador Morales to a meeting with Minister of National Security Martin Joseph. Minister Joseph expressed gratitude for the recent visits by USG energy infrastructure security assessment teams and recalled strong U.S. support for T&T's recent chairmanship of the Inter American Committee Against Terrorism (OAS/CICTE), during which critical infrastructure protection was first raised on that body's agenda. Minister Joseph also praised T&T's partnership with the State of Delaware for exceeded expectations, resulting in a number of valuable military and law enforcement exchanges.

¶10. (SBU) Ambassador Morales commended T&T for including safety and security as elements of the SOA theme. He also underscored the US commitment to a successful SOA, noting that one administration was laying the groundwork for the next during a time of political transition. Stressing the importance of the social aspects of security, such as health and education, Morales emphasized that the security issue would require a hemispheric approach, including the promotion of social alternatives to crime. The Minister noted that the GOTT was offering such alternatives while also attempting to stem the flow of drugs and firearms from the South American mainland. He added that T&T would convene a meeting in mid-June of regional military chiefs to discuss coordination of military assets in the region, and he asked for U.S. support for that effort.

¶11. (SBU) Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez said that he was in constant contact with the U.S., especially due to the large size and logistical footprint of the U.S. delegation. Minister Joseph asked, half plaintively and half jokingly, if the new U.S. President might consider adjusting the size of his contingent to fit the size of a "small Caribbean island." Ambassador Rodriguez intervened to explain that arrangements for a POTUS delegation included a fix

number of personnel, adding that T&T was good at finding creative solutions to hosting international conferences and would bring off the SOA with typical Trinidadian panache and flair. Ambassador Austin asked that it be noted for the record that Trinidad had been referred to as a "small Caribbean island," since he was frequently joshed about the small size of his native St. Vincent.

Status of Summit Process

¶12. (SBU) In separate meetings at his own office, Ambassador Rodriguez elaborated on substantive and logistical plans for the Summit. In the interest of limiting the number of new mandates and tying new mandates more closely to Summit themes, T&T is proposing that Summit leaders issue a single "declaration of commitment" document rather than a declaration plus a separate "plan of action" document.

¶13. (SBU) Rodriguez, his deputy Beverly Khan, and T&T Secretariat officer Tara-Lisa Persaud explained their effort to obtain information and data from Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) partner institutions in areas relevant to SOA themes, using a reporting template developed by CABEI. Morales voiced concern that countries may not agree on which data and what baseline to use, particularly in reference to Summit mandates, and he also sought clarification on how the CABEI template would be used. Khan acknowledged that choice of data and baselines would in fact be a point of discussion. Rodriguez added that the exercise was not a comprehensive survey of past Summit mandates; rather, the T&T National Secretariat was using the CABEI template to collect information on what, if anything, the JSWG partners were doing in areas relevant to SOA-5 themes and how these efforts relate to past Summit mandates, if at all.

¶14. (SBU) Rodriguez emphasized that any new mandates would be contained in the text of the declaration; there would be no matrix attached to the declaration and no attempt to evaluate what countries have and have not done to implement past mandates. With respect to past Summit mandates, Khan noted that not many had quantitative targets, but it would be necessary to consider whether to retain or revisit any existing quantitative targets that relate to SOA-5 themes. Persaud cited a past mandate linked to the first Millennium Development Goal on poverty reduction, by way of explaining the T&T National Secretariat's approach. While the hemisphere was well on its way to meeting that goal based on available data, Summit participants would need to consider how rising food prices would affect that progress and what could be done in response. Morales welcomed the explanation but also flagged

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Millennium Development Goals as a sensitive area for the U.S.

¶15. (SBU) On next steps, Rodriguez indicated that T&T aims to unveil the initial draft Summit declaration at a brief Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meeting in Washington DC on/about July 18. While he had hoped to do this at the OAS General Assembly meeting in Medellin, JSWG partner institutions had missed target dates to provide the information requested by T&T. Rodriguez promised to share the draft declaration with the U.S. and a few others in advance of the July SIRG, commenting that he would prefer to get a considered reaction from the U.S. ahead of time rather than hearing U.S. views for the first time in plenary. He also signaled that he would look to the U.S. and Canada to help bring others along, adding that he was also coordinating closely with Brasilia and Santiago.

¶16. (SBU) Negotiations on text would begin at a SIRG meeting in September, with subsequent SIRG meetings in late October and early December. Barbados and Jamaica have each agreed to host a SIRG meeting, with dates under discussion. T&T is also talking to Bahamas about hosting one of these SIRG meetings.

Where to put all the people and planes?

¶17. (SBU) Rodriguez confirmed that the Summit will take place April 17-19. He had postponed announcing the dates pending conclusion of contract negotiations for two cruise ships to house SOA delegations, and those contracts had now been signed. While some U.S. aircraft would have to be parked on nearby islands, Rodriguez promised that rooms would be available for the entire U.S. delegation. The Summit Secretariat is developing a formula for the President plus certain number at the Hyatt Regency, with overflow at another hotel and on board the cruise ships. Rodriguez offered assurances that renovations at the Hilton would be completed by March, and he asked that the U.S. work through T&T's National Secretariat for access to all properties.

¶18. (SBU) On security preparations, Major Francis of the TT Defense Force (seconded to the National Summit Secretariat) said that T&T will be able to cover land, with some regional assistance, but will need help with air capability and gaps in coverage of seas. Khan conveyed that T&T will seek U.S. help with security sweeps of the cruise ships, ideally to be started while vessels are en route from their home ports in Miami and Puerto Rico.

Other Activities

¶19. (U) In a breakfast meeting with selected leaders of the American Chamber of T&T, Ambassador Rodriguez discussed Summit themes, and Ambassador Morales invited AmCham's input. AmCham president Raymond Gatcliffe encouraged the two Ambassadors to use the AmCham's upcoming Business Future of the Americas conference and regional AmCham annual meeting as a sounding board for Summit issues.

¶20. (U) Ambassador Morales also paid a call on Chief of the Defense Staff Brigadier General Edmund Dillon at Defense Force Headquarters in Chaguaramas and took an aerial tour of Trinidad's energy sector, courtesy of the Ministry of National Security and Ministry of Energy.

AUSTIN